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The Magdalena Bay Resolution.

There is serious reason to fear that the Lodge resolution adopted by the Senate on August 2d, by a vote of 51 to 4, will have mischievous results in more than one direction. The text of the resolution is as follows:

Resolved, That when any harbor or other place on the American continents is so situated that the occupation thereof for naval or military purposes might threaten the communications or the safety of the United States, the Government of the United States could not see without grave concern the possession of such harbor or other place by any corporation or association which has such a relation to another government, not American, as to give that government practical power of control for national purposes.

It seems incredible that the Senate of the United States should have allowed itself to be drawn, under the existing circumstances, into the approval of such a declaration as this. There was no occasion what-

ever for it. The investigation of the Magdalena Bay affair, authorized by a previous resolution, introduced by Senator Lodge, had proved clearly that the Japanese Government had had nothing to do with the fishing company with whom the American owners of the property were negotiating for its sale. After this was made clear, the whole matter ought to have been dropped, after a report of the facts to the Senate. The course which the Senate took, after it had discovered the true situation, looks very much like an effort on the part of Senator Lodge and his fellow Senators to cover up the weakness and unwisdom of their former action, by an appeal to a popular sentiment which has never failed to respond quickly and enthusiastically and sometimes blindly to any hint of trespass on the rights and the assumed political supremacy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

The adoption of this resolution, following immediately upon the investigation, although it is couched in perfectly general terms, will inevitably impress the Japanese Government and people with the conviction that our Senate, and indeed the whole Government and people, do not trust them, but believe them to be secretly and persistently cherishing ill-will and evil designs against the United States, which they are seeking covertly the first opportunity to carry out. Unfortunately a section of the people of this country, misled by anti-Japanese orators and yellow journals, believe this of Japan. But the Senate knows better, and instead of catering to this miserable and utterly groundless sentiment it ought rather to have taken advantage of the occasion to put the seal of its indignant disapproval upon it. That would have been the high-minded and statesmanlike thing to do. This gratuitous offense to the Japanese sensibilities at the present time, for such it is even though the Senate doubtless did not intend it so, is entirely unworthy of our country. It can hardly fail to have a lasting and most unfortunate influence on the general attitude of the Far East towards us.

In the direction of the Monroe Doctrine in general there was still less occasion for any such resolution. Looking around the entire horizon of the Americas not a single ground can be cited anywhere for the reassertion and extension of the Monroe Doctrine, as is said to be made in this resolution. Where is any commercial or trading company seeking to get concession of positions which may be turned against us by the home government as military or naval bases? Not even the most lynx-eyed "patriotism" of any member of the Senate can point out a single instance. But to seek to avoid giving

direct offense to Japan—the country aimed at in the resolution—by putting it into general terms and thus evincing suspicion and a bit of “daring” toward the other nations with which we are supposed to be on terms of good friendship, is a very curious proceeding. The effort to save the Monroe Doctrine and revivify it in this way is doomed to wretched failure. The principles underlying the Doctrine, so far as they have any application to the conditions of our day, need no such artificial underpinning. The less that is said about them the better. A really strong man does not go about his community expressing suspicion of his neighbors and warning them to keep at a respectful distance from him.

In a third way the resolution of the Senate can scarcely fail to do harm. It is well known that the republics south of us are affected with a growing suspicion and fear of the United States, because of its frequent assertion of its intention to control the political destinies of the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine to them is fast coming to mean the interference of the United States or the disposition to interfere with their independent sovereignty and their autonomy. Not even the friendly visits of two Secretaries of State have been able to convince the Latin-American countries that we have no intention of exercising or attempting to exercise political domination over them. The increasingly prosperous and powerful republics of South America,—Brazil, the Argentine Republic and Chile especially—believe that they are quite capable of looking after their own interests and are less and less inclined to be dictated to by their more powerful northern neighbor. The Monroe Doctrine means to them more and more a menace rather than a protection. The Magdalena Bay resolution cannot fail to deepen these feelings of fear and distrust. The resolution, therefore, from this point of view will almost certainly remain a dead letter, and thus bring us into deeper discredit. It is not likely that the Argentine Republic or any other of the prominent South American Republics will be in the least influenced by the Lodge resolution in dealing with any foreign commercial or industrial companies which may, for purely business purposes, wish to gain concessions on the bays or elsewhere in those countries. Things will take their natural business course, as they ought to do, and as our great and powerful country ought to wish them to do.

The Panama Canal Bill.

The Panama Canal bill, as finally adopted by both Houses of Congress, was signed by President Taft on Saturday night, August 24, and is now law.

The most objectional feature of the bill, from the international point of view—and that is the only point of view from which we consider it—was eliminated before final action upon it was taken. This was the provision in the bill in its original form that ships of citizens of the United States engaged in foreign commerce should be exempt from paying canal tolls. This provision was clearly in violation of the Hay-Pauncefote

treaty, as pointed out by the British Foreign Office, and the President had let it be known that if the bill came to him in this form he would veto it.

In its final form, however, the bill retained the provision that ships engaged exclusively in our coastwise trade shall be exempt from paying canal tolls. Two opinions are held as to the legitimacy of this feature. The President and a large majority of the Senators contend that it is not in violation of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. The vessels of foreign nations cannot engage in our coastwise trade, and there is therefore no discrimination against their ships doing business with our shores. They are all to be treated in exactly the same way. The President is so anxious, however, that foreign nations may not be left to feel that our Government is intentionally violating the treaty and discriminating against their ships that he has proposed to Congress the passing of a resolution declaring that the measure adopted is not considered by this Government in violation of the treaty provisions regarding the canal.

A few Senators, on the other hand, hold that the plain terms of the treaty are such that the exemption of coastwise trading vessels from paying tolls is a clear violation of it, even though such exemption may not result in any direct discrimination against ships of other countries.

It is not yet known what attitude the British Government will officially take toward the bill in its final form, whether it will continue its protests or drop them. The chief ground of objection has been removed by the striking out of the provision exempting our ships engaged in foreign trade from paying tolls. The British press has in general severely arraigned the Senate and the President for the action taken, charging that the Hay-Pauncefote treaty has been deliberately ignored and that our Government has narrowly and selfishly shown a disposition to cripple British trade and that of other countries at the canal as much as possible. These charges will doubtless be modified or dropped when the real nature of the canal legislation is better understood. The British Government will certainly not take officially any such extreme ground. But if that government shall still put forward the contention that the canal legislation as approved by the President violates the evident intent and purpose of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, then we shall be asked to refer the question to the Hague Court, and to the Hague Court it will go. The outcome will be sensible and peaceful, and there will be no serious disturbance, resulting from the difference, of the good relations which have so long existed between us and our British friends on the other side of the sea.